

Every reality which can experience something is nāma, that is: citta and cetasika (I do not talk about nibbana, the unconditioned nāma). Memory is a cetasika, saññā, it can experience something. Realities which cannot experience anything are rūpas.

Ideas or concepts are neither nāma nor rūpa, because they are not realities, they can be the object of the citta which thinks, but they are not real. Citta can think of realities, but also of things which are not real, concepts or names, stories, phantasies.

It appears from your letter that you find it wrong to think of concepts, it is as if you want to correct yourself. It is natural to think of concepts, we have to in our daily life. This kind of thinking arises because of conditions, why correct it? But even thinking can be object of awareness, it has a characteristic. We do not have the intention to be mindful of thinking, we do not try to catch vitakka, or vicāra, but sometimes that characteristic may appear. When does it appear? When we do not have the intention to be aware. Do you have the intention to be mind-ful? Certainly also that intention can be object of awareness, but I find mostly when we have the intention to be aware there is bound to be thinking about realities instead of mindfulness of just one object at a time. When there is thinking about a whole, or an idea of a cetasika which we have in our mind, the object is not a nāma or rūpa, but a concept.

For instance, when I am ironing, heat may appear, just heat. At such a moment there is no idea of an iron. It would be absurd that an iron can be experienced through the body-sense. It is just the heat. A moment later we may think of: heat of the iron, then the citta thinks of a concept. The concept is not real, but the thinking is. All this sounds convincing. But now let us substitute body for iron. When heat appears somewhere in the body, do we have a kind of possessive idea of my body-heat? It shows our clinging to the body. Or can it be just heat? Only for a moment, when we do not have the intention to be mindful, but it just arises? When we think of body-heat there is a concept, not a reality. Sometimes our heart may be beating fast. Is it our heart, or can just hardness or motion appear? We cling to what we call 'my heart'. At another moment we may die when the heart is beating too fast. How beneficial when mindfulness has been accumulated, it would be a condition for us to cling less to the body. We will need that.

We may have doubts whether contours of different objects we think we see are appearing through eyes or through the mind-door. Then I find that it helps to remember that seeing and for example reading are very different, recognizing the letters and knowing what they mean are done by cittas which experience objects through the mind-door, but since cittas arise and fall away so fast it seems that reading is done through the eye-door. It reminds us of the

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amount of our ignorance and this is healthy, not discouraging. Do we have the intention to know visible object and seeing? The less there is intention, the better.

It seems that you think that mindfulness should know all the cetasikas which arise with the citta, all at once at the same time. Mindfulness can only be aware of one object, otherwise it is not awareness, but only what we take for awareness.

You write something about people experiencing voidness. I do not know what that is, ^(it) sounds like a kind of speculation. From the teachings I know that realities are void of the self, same meaning as anattā, and also nibbāna is called the void, but all this is beyond my scope, I cannot experience it. Do you have the intention to attain vipassana ñāṇas and to attain nibbāna? I know that it won't happen when one has the intention, since it is the task of paññā to attain when the time has come for it. I think less and less of ñāṇas or of nibbāna because I find it difficult enough to know different characteristics of nāma and rūpa. I am not curious to know what nibbāna is like, it would only be speculation.

You use the term arūpa, a state of leaving the body behind. I do not know this, again, beyond by scope. It seems a kind of thinking. ^(means nāma, it) Arūpa is used in composite words, like: arūpa-jhāna, which can be attained only by those who cultivated the conditions for it. Arūpa-plane is the plane of existence where there is no rūpa and I do not know what it is like.

Happy resettling in San Francisco. I sympathize with you that you had some disappointments as to your house in the woods. But now you have Rina and some other friends.

Kindest regards,

Nina